"Nobody is too anything..."

Students with Deaf-Blindness & Other
Significant Disabilities as
Communicators, Writers & Readers

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Agenda

• An Overview of Typical Literacy Development

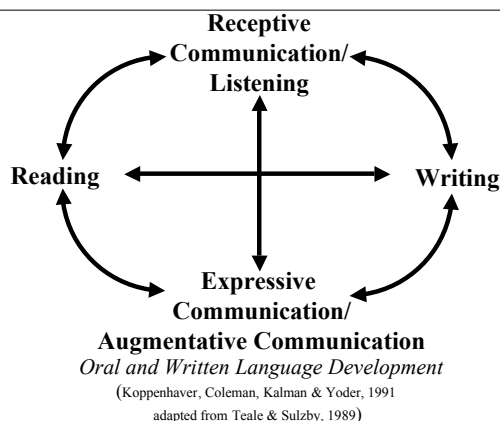• Creating Environments That Foster Emergent Literacy: The Classrooms

• Matthew's Story

**Go to The Center for Literacy & Disability Studies website to see literacy profiles and to download free resources

www.med.unc.edu/ahs/clds

Nobody is "too anything" to benefit from...
meaningful opportunities to communicate, **write** and read.

Typical Literacy Development

• Emergent Literacy

• Early Conventional Literacy

• Provides a structure for understanding where our students are in literacy development
  • Helps us identify appropriate goals & activities.

Receptive Communication/ Listening

Reading

Writing

Expressive Communication/ Augmentative Communication

Oral and Written Language Development

(Koppenhaver, Coleman, Kalman & Yoder, 1991 adapted from Teale & Sulzby, 1989)

The Reciprocal Relationship of Language and Literacy
(Snow & Tabors, 1993; Dickinson & McCabe, 2001)

• Early language is the foundation for literacy.

• Students use their language to engage in literacy activities.
  – Phonology, Vocabulary, Syntax, Morphology, Pragmatics

• In turn, involvement in literacy activities, increases their language.

What is Emergent Literacy?

Emergent literacy is
"... the reading and writing behaviors that precede and develop into conventional literacy."

(Sulzby, 1991)

A Current of View of Literacy Development: Emergent Literacy
(Teale & Sulzby, 1986, 1991)

- Emergent literacy begins at birth long before formal instruction.

- Children learn about literacy when they are _actively_ engaged.

- Children learn about literacy through real life experiences & interactions.

- Emergent literacy behaviors are fleeting and variable depending on text, task, and environment.

- Reading, writing, speaking, listening all develop concurrently.

All of These Experiences Lead to the Development of Successful Conventional **_Writers_** & Readers

AAC Literature Supports Giving Our Students Access to Emergent Literacy

- Bedrosian, (1997)
- Blischak, (1995)
- Koppenhaver, Coleman, Kalman & Yoder, (1991)
- Koppenhaver & Erickson,. (2003)
- Koppenhaver, Erickson, Harris, McLellan, Skotko & Newton, (2001)
- Light & Kelford Smith, (1993)
- Light, Binger & Kelford Smith, (1994)
- Miles, (2005)   www.dblink.org/lib/literacy.htm
- Pierce & McWilliams, (1993)

Recognizing what we do with typically developing children to support emergent literacy development

Conditions of Literacy Learning (Cambourne, 1993, 2003)
- High expectations
- Active engagement: Freedom to experiment & in order to become problem-solvers
- Attribute meaning to **ALL** attempts
- Foster rich social interactions-lots of **TALK** & fun!
- Approximations/errors are accepted & celebrated
- Loads of models- 24/7 immersion
- More knowledgeable other

Great Article About Raising Expectations!!!!

The Central Role of Expectations in Communication and Literacy Success:
A Parent Perspective

by Bonnie Mintun

Download from Assistive Technology Outcomes and Benefits, Volume 2(1), 2005
www.atia.org

Emergent Writing

*"Children acquire a working knowledge of the alphabetic system not only through reading, but also through **writing**."*

(IRA & NAEYC, 1998)

Build Active Engagement: WRITE From the START!

Writing With Alternative Pencils CD,
Available from the Center for Literacy & Disability Studies
University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC

- Color Coded Eye Gaze Frame
- Print Alphabet Flip Chart
- Braille Alphabet Flip Chart
- Tactual IntelliKeys Custom Overlay
- Braille IntelliKeys Custom Overlay
- Onscreen Keyboard

Matthew's Door Into Literacy... Through **Writing**

MEville to WEville:
An Early Language & Literacy Program
(Ablenet, www.ablenetinc.com)

Structured Lesson Plans for:

- Learning New Words
- Vocabulary Activities
- Literacy Activities
- Writing Activities
- Word Wall Activities

Erickson, K. A., Clendon, S. A., Abraham, L., Roy, V., Van De Carr, H. (2005). Toward positive literacy outcomes for students with significant developmental disabilities. *Assistive Technology Outcomes and Benefits*, www.atia.org 2(1), 45-51.

Students Learn About Literacy Through Real Life Experiences & **Interactions**

Emergent Readers Need Book Experiences That Support…
(Clay, 1993)

- Building background knowledge/concepts about the world
- Building vocabulary
- Making the connection between the spoken word and print
- Getting the notion that reading is worthwhile and enjoyable
- How concepts about print work
- How others make meaning from texts

Shared Reading: An Ideal Time to Teach the Use of an AAC System

- Move beyond repeated lines
- Use of open ended vocabulary to get adults to respond to student throughout the activity.

- Great way to work on pragmatics
- Can be used in OTHER books
- Can be used in OTHER activities during the day
- Consistent symbol set fosters motor/visual memory

- Will still want to use "fringe" vocabulary to support story-retelling & other receptive concepts

Sample Messages for Shared Reading
(From the Reading Interaction Kit, Center for Literacy & Disability Studies)
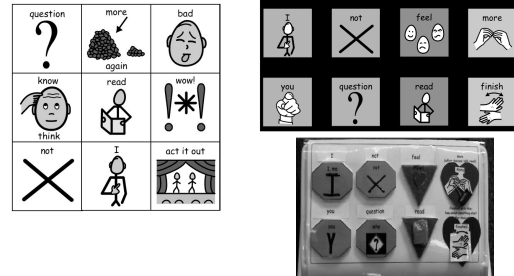
Opportunities for Independent Exploration With Meaningful Books

Changes Observed Over Time

- Most evident in Matthew's writings
- Demonstrated important knowledge that letters were related to sounds
- Demonstrated knowledge of specific letter-sound relationships: very, very early sound spelling
- Time to move onto early conventional word instruction

Research Findings for Word Instruction with Students with Significant Disabilities

- Can learn to read/write using research based general education literacy instruction using print that has not been adapted.
  - Blischak, 1995
  - Erickson et al, 1997
  - Gipe, 1993
  - Hanser & Erickson, 2007
  - Hedrick, Katims & Carr, 1999
  - Katims, 1995

- Can learn phonics--they are not sight word only readers
  - Erickson et al, 1997
  - Hanser & Erickson, 2007

Sequential Systematic Phonics They Use (Cunningham, 2000)

- This is beginning conventional word instruction NOT emergent literacy instruction.
- Combines letter by letter and decoding by analogy phonics instruction.
- Systematic & Explicit:
  - Daily lessons follow the same format but use different words and letters.

- Goal increased understandings of decoding and spelling over time- NOT mastery each day.

- Students make words, sort words, and use the words they've made to read and/or write new words.

In Summary...

- Consider typical literacy development... emergent literacy...conventional literacy...

- Support use of communication devices during reading & writing
- Call your student a communicator, a writer & a reader
- Give students opportunities to experiment
- Celebrate & attribute meaning to attempts
- Observe for changes over time: they **CAN** do it

"Nobody is TOO anything..."

If you treat individuals as they are,
they will stay as they are,

but if you treat them as if they were
what they ought to be and could be,

they will become what they ought to be
and could be.
(von Goethe)